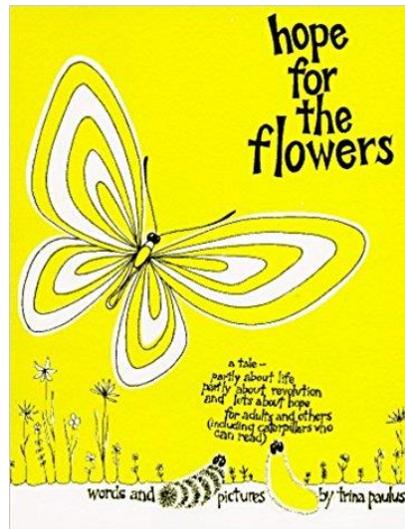


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Hope for the Flowers By Trina Paulus

Introduction

Hope for the Flowers was written and illustrated by Trina Paulus and published by Paulist Press in September 1972. That year the book won the Christopher Award for the most inspirational book. *Hope for the Flowers* is Trina Paulus's only book. Trina devotes her life to spirituality, environmental activism, and organic gardening. This book has become an international and inspirational classic.

Summary

At first glance, *Hope for the Flowers* appears to be an illustrated children's book with simple drawings and hand-written text, but this is only the surface. As you begin to read and follow its main characters, two caterpillars named Stripe and Yellow, deeper layers of this simple story begin to reveal themselves. On the surface you will see the struggles of these two

caterpillars as they attempt to follow all the other caterpillars to the top of a pillar, the seeming goal of life. Soon these two make friends and you watch them make decisions about how to live based on higher callings. Through helping each other and using love as their guide, these two become the greatness that is truly meant for them.

Take your time and follow Stripe and Yellow as they lead you on a highly spiritual and emotional journey. Their tale explores life's deeper meanings and society's true possibilities. You will never see a butterfly and feel the same way again. Life, love, death, revolution, re-birth, and hope are the true messages in this tale.

Discussion Guide

1. This book is written and illustrated in a simple style. Did this style help you experience the book or was it distracting? Did the illustrations aid you in imagining what was happening? Do you think this book could be effective without the illustrations?
2. Insects are ubiquitous. Whether people love or loathe them they are unavoidable. Were insects a good choice to tell this story? Why do you think the author chose butterflies?
3. There are other insects that go through a complete metamorphosis, like flies or beetles. Do you think this tale would have worked using a different insect? What type of insect would you choose to tell a similar tale?
4. This book has many different layers. It could be a simple children's fable, a story about death and mourning, a story about spiritual awakening, a story about revolution, or a story about love just to name a few. What story did you see at first? Did this change as you got to the end of the book? What do you think the author's intentional message was?

5. Butterflies, a type of lepidopteran, are inspirational because of their beauty but lepidopterans are one of the most destructive insects to our fields and forests. Their larvae are eating machines. Why do you think the beauty of the adults make humans forget the destruction caused by the immatures? How important do you think their adult beauty is to their survival?
6. While butterflies are beautiful, many people cringe at the appearance of their larvae. Their larvae are re-born to something beautiful. Even their ecological niche changes from crop eater to crop pollinator. Why do you think the theme of re-birth is popular in human society? Have you experience re-birth in your own life? Who were you before?
7. The book was about the lives and struggles of two insects. Why do you think the author chose the title *Hope for the Flowers*? Do you think you would have named the book differently?
8. Hopelessness leads to despair but the direction in which we hope can also lead to despair. This book leads us to follow several paths. What paths did our main characters pursue? What paths in human existence might these paths represent?
9. Using the paths you have come up with in question 8, which path do you think you are on? Are you satisfied with your path? How might you use the lessons in this book to change your life for the better?